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ABSTRACT

Impressions of the Republic of Cuba are presented based on a visit to Cuba in 1978 by a delegation of the American Association of State Colleges and Universities. The following topics are discussed: the Cuban educational system, Cuban postsecondary education, goals of postsecondary education, elementary education, vocational and technical education, adult education, the relationship between postsecondary education and the cultural arts, physical sciences at the Centro Nacional de Investigaciones Cientificas, agricultural and rural development, race relations, and potential programs for United States Cuban education collaboration. (SW)

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IMPRESSIONS OF THE REPUBLIC OF CUBA

A Report by a Delegation of the
American Association of State Colleges and Universities
to the Republic of Cuba

December 2–10, 1978

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
EDUCATION

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Background for the AASCU Delegation

One of AASCU's basic approaches is to build bridges—between people, between institutions, and between cultures. Recent endeavors involving AASCU delegations to other countries include a 1975 mission to the People's Republic of China, and more recently to Egypt, where AASCU representatives talked with President Sadat months before the Camp David sessions. AASCU groups have been invited to other countries in Asia, Africa, and South America. So it was natural that in December 1978 AASCU attempted to build cultural relationships with the Republic of Cuba, a neighbor near in geography but not so near politically. The 90-mile gap between Key West and Havana seemed ready for educational bridge-building from both ends.

Planning for such an operation inevitably begins many months in advance. Conversations involving AASCU's Allan Ostar and Maurice Harari with the Cuban Interests Section of the Embassy of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic in Washington began as early as October 1977. As Cuba and the United States have not had diplomatic relations since 1961, a Cuban Embassy is not at present officially possible in Washington. Since the closing of the American Embassy in Havana, U.S. interests there have been handled by the U.S. Interests Section of the Swiss Embassy.

As relations in Washington between Ostar and Senor Sanchez-Parodi of the Cuban Interests Section became increasingly friendly, an invitation for the visit was extended on January 12, 1978 in the name of the Cuban Ministry of Superior (Higher) Education. The 17-member delegation included eight presidents and chancellors of AASCU institutions and wives of six of these men. All served as useful members of the team. The team was chaired by E. K. Fretwell Jr., then president of State University College at Buffalo (NY) and president of the AASCU Board of Directors, and presently chancellor of The University of North Carolina at Charlotte. Administrative arrangements were handled by Maurice Harari, AASCU's vice president for International Programs. The senior leadership also included Allan Ostar, AASCU president and Cecil Mackey, then president of Texas Tech University and presently president of Michigan State University, immediate former president of AASCU. Of immeasurable value to the entire group was Willie Sanchez, professor of education at New Mexico Highlands University, whose bilingual ability added much to the enterprise.

As in the case of the delegation to the People's Republic of China, the AASCU visit preceded official U.S. recognition of the other country. In both situations, the general plans for the trip were discussed in advance with appropriate officials of the U.S. Office of Education and the Department of State.

The basic purpose, for which all the arrangements were but necessary framework, was to answer a central question, hopefully in the affirmative: Is the time ripe for serious discussion in principle of an exchange of teachers, students, educational materials, and possibly other approaches, between two neighboring countries which have much in common despite philosophical and political differences?

The week in Havana reached its climax at the final Saturday evening event when the Cuban representatives present, including Vice President for Education, Culture, and Sports Jose Fernandez and Ministers F. Vecino Alegret (Higher Education) and Asela de los Santos (Education), indicated that they would give serious attention to a basic cooperative agreement in draft form which AASCU had prepared and representatives of the two groups had discussed the previous evening.

The format for the week, as indicated elsewhere, included visits to a wide range of institutions and functions. In a sense, the entire gamut of life was touched, extending from a maternity hospital to a cemetery. Street scenes, department store visits, conversations with students, local citizens, and other international visitors, usually on an impromptu basis, rounded out the experience.

The relatively short time (eight days are not enough to sample all facets of a rapidly-changing country) precluded in-depth studies of many political and economic matters and visits to parts of Cuba beyond easy bus travel from the Havana area where the delegation was housed. However, through the good offices of guides and interpreters, as well as the hospitality of official hosts, the delegation was able to observe much in the expanded week.

The chapters that follow–relatively brief by editor's command–record the delegation's impressions of selected high points of AASCU/Cuba/1973.

Cuban Educational System

Fidel Castro has said, "I have always had a great addiction to education. My plan, which is not original, was to universalize study as well as work." One of the prime promises of the Revolution was to make a basic education available to all. It is being kept.

Four aspects of the educational system in Cuba stand out: universality; meritocratic approach; programmed drive for success; and centrally controlled structure.

The Cuban government feels that education for children up to the age of six should be optional. Between ages six and sixteen, however, it is mandatory.

Education begins in the day care centers. At present, there are about 650 day care centers accommodating some 55,000 children. The centers exist primarily for working mothers with children ages 45 days to six years. Approximately 30 percent of the mothers in Cuba work outside the home, compared with a much higher and increasing number of American mothers who are moving beyond the boundaries of their homes. The Cubans expect to foster this trend by opening more day care centers, thus spurring more women to the work force.

The family role in the educational process is emphasized between the ages of six and twelve. During this period, students stay at home while attending an elementary school for grades one through six. Preparation for this stage begins about the age of four and is provided through a pre-school experience at the day care centers.

A basic pre-college curriculum and a wide variety of practical courses are offered. The usual format involves a combined work-study experience with one half of the school day devoted to class instruction and the other half taken up by productive work in agriculture, electronics, or other areas of social and economic value. The rationale behind the work-study program is two-fold: first, officials claim the work serves to pay for the cost of the schools, helping them become self-sustaining; second, the higher pedologic purpose of teaching everyone the value of manual labor is served. The work ethic is pervasive in the Cuban system.

New, modern schools exemplifying east European technology are sprouting continually. Long, low, concrete secondary schools have become Cuba's new landmarks, particularly in the countryside. In addition to class space, these new schools house dormitories and recreational facilities, often including a popular olympic size swimming pool. Students live at school during the week and return home on weekends.

Under the guidance of a centralized ministry, uniform testing is employed to make standards enforceable, if perhaps overly homogeneous. Copious records are kept on every aspect of student performance to allow effective diagnosis of problems and reliable assessment of aptitude.

Despite strong threads of highly dogmatic socialism, the Cuban system is highly meritocratic, even elitist in its own way. Both academic and work achievement is amply rewarded. At the 560-student pre-university high school visited by the delegates, demonstrated competency is a prerequisite for advancement; each student must master all subjects to a 75 percent level to qualify for University training. All but six students at this particular school were making satisfactory progress. The more highly motivated and talented students are identified early and given strong encouragement and support. The system is geared to foster the highest possible level of success.

A demonstration of competency also was evident at the polytechnic university visited by the delegation. This university, roughly equivalent to a school of engineering in the States, only admits the best students, and these students are required to pass all prescribed courses before advancing. At this level, work experience also is provided.

The system is uniformly structured with all materials and programs of study emanating from the Ministry of Education. The approach is effective and productive both for teaching and learning; however, personalized qualities such as creativity and imagination tend to become diminished in this "xerox-like" strategy.

Still, individuals are cared for in the sense that any student who might be slipping in his work is directed to tutorial help in the form of a person designated as a "godfather" or "godmother." If encouragement is needed, it is given. The godfather also insures that the student is making the most efficient use of available time. If this approach fails, the parents are contacted and reminded of their responsibilities. Nightly tutorial sessions are scheduled and extended into the weekends, if necessary. Already present are strong social pressures which drive the student to fulfill the high parental expectations that are reinforced from other directions.

Cuba has a big stake in the success of its educational venture. Over 10 percent of the gross national product is devoted to developing efficient workers, highly competent technicians, and the top-flight professionals needed to fulfill the ambitious goals of the revolution and also keep Castro's long-standing commitment to provide universal and equal educational opportunity.

Cuban Postsecondary Education

In a rural area outside Havana, the government of Cuba has established an institute for 4500 young people preparing for a career in engineering, science, or technology. On the bulletin boards, on walls in the corridors, everywhere, the eye confronts the slogan, "Every student a worker and every worker a student." This epigram succinctly states the philosophy of the regime. By decree, all students must be more than academicians. Fidel Castro's new society calls for educated individuals free from all negative characteristics associated with individualism; free also from all anti-scientific prejudice and capable of playing an active part in the country's total economic, social, and cultural development.

The postsecondary system of education can be categorized into the following: university education; scientific, politechnical (including mathematics) training programs; normal or teacher training schools; professional education with associated professional internships, such as medicine and law; postsecondary institutes in fine arts; and vocational education—more generally referred to as artes de oficio (occupational arts).

As on all levels, higher education in Cuba is an amalgam of study and work. Every student in Cuban secondary and postsecondary schools contributes three hours per day—Monday through Friday—to the national work force. After finishing school, every person must contribute three years of work to the social system before he or she is free to take other employment. In essence, Cubans always work for the social system as it is the only source of employment in the country.

Higher education has been placed within the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport headed by Senor Jose Fernandez, and assisted by the Minister of Education, Senor Aselo de los Santos. The Ministry exercises a tightly centralized control over a postsecondary system consisting of four universities, three university centers, 23 centers for science and technology, and 19 teacher training schools.

Statistics reveal some impressive achievements since the 1959 revolution. In that year, 15,000 Cubans, almost exclusively from the well-to-do families, enrolled in college level courses. By 1978, the number had increased to 145,000. The number of professors also grew, although not proportionately, from 1500 to 10,000. The Ministry estimates that Cuba will require the services of 20,000 professors to provide instruction for 300,000 students by 1985.

In 1971, an act linking education to the vital production needs of the state promoted the training of more teachers. The program is carefully monitored and annual conferences are held to examine the extent of progress toward the established goal.

Teachers are trained in specialized schools, not in the universities. The AASCU delegation visited La Escuela de Formacion de Maestros: Salvador Allende, a teacher training school in Cuba with facilities for 4500 students, 87 percent of whom are women. There are four schools with the capacity of Salvador Allende in the country and 15 smaller ones with enrollments of approximately 1000 to 2000. The potential teachers enter these schools after the ninth grade and spend five years in training. The students follow a prescribed plan of work, study, and observations. They study the usual subjects: pedagogy, psychology, behavioral dysfunctions, didactics, and subject matters from other disciplines. The fourth year is divided equally between

practice and study. The fith year is spent almost entirely teaching classes, along with conferences at the teacher training institute where students' study plans are reviewed, updated, and directed.

All educational services are free; a generous scholarship program covers board and lodging for those who require it, as well as medical care and transportation. Finally, some students receive stipends for clothing, sports, and additional personal expenses. No doubt this policy has played a significant role in developing support for the goals of the regime. Before 1959, most children of the lower classes left the educational system before completing the sixth grade; secondary and university education were beyond their reach. For all intents and purposes, the education of the underpriviledged ended at age fourteen.

The curriculum emphasizes the needs of the state, and as these needs are aimed at the production of essential goods and services, it is not surprising that every student is slated for a specific career. One does not find undecided majors at the University of Havana.

Nevertheless, the arts and the humanities are not neglected, and there are specialities in art, music, dance, and sculpture. Again the emphasis appears to be on the training of teachers for the primary and secondary schools; and it must be noted that the Ministry of Culture takes a very limited view concerning freedom for artistic creativity. These subjects are encouraged primarily to increase the cultural awareness of the people. The artist has freedom as far as form is concerned, but content must be in accord with the aims of the Revolution. This position is forthrightly and unabashedly stated. At the First National Congress of Education and Culture, Fidel Castro declared:

> "We, a revolutionary people in a revolutionary process, value the cultural and artistic creators for their usefulness for the people, for the contribution they make to man, for the contribution they make to man's happiness. We deal with political values. There is no aesthetic value without human content. There is no aesthetic value against man."

While it proved impossible to get definite figures on the cost of postsecondary education in Cuba today, it is clear that a substantial investment has been made and will continue. Construction of educational facilities appears to be ongoing throughout the country, and the quality of equipment is good and getting better. Near Havana, a new institution for the study of all the agricultural sciences nears completion. Encompassing many hundreds of acres, it will provide facilities and equipment equal to the best of American agricultural universities.

In sum, the educational achievement in Cuba is impressive, although any visiting American academician probably will come away with deep reservations. As one observer put it, "Although admirable in many ways, the system points out that intellectuals are not going to be prized as such. No one knows the long-term effects on a culture that values only well-rounded people to the exclusion of 'thinkers'."

Goals of Postsecondary Education

The ultimate goals of education in Cuba are:

- To prepare worthy members of the social system, knowledgeable and dedicated to its underlying principles.

- To prepare and assign occupational roles to serve the needs of the society.

The preparation of students follows the same lines found in the U.S.: a traditional line of academic preparation; professional instruction in law, medicine, teaching, engineering, science, and related technologies; and vocational training.

The academic curriculum prepares students for university positions and also provides the liberal arts component of professional and vocational training. There seems to be a pervasive appreciation for the role of academic foundations in all walks of life, particularly for professionals.

Cubans hold professional areas in high regard. In the years immediately following Castro's takeover, the country experienced a mass exodus of middle and upper class members, including the professionals. Cuba was left devoid of medical personnel, lawyers, engineers, scientists, and university faculty, among others. Cubans proudly point out that in the ensuing years, following the "Triumph of the Revolution", they have been able to train enough professionals to meet at least the basic needs of their society. Another source of pride and an example of their high degree of humanism is their claim that they have not only ministered to their needs, but also have been able to share their professional pool with other developing nations.

Vocational training pervades the entire educational system due to the link between work and study. The fact that each person is a worker for the improvement of society is stressed at all levels, particularly among students. It is inspiring to witness how Cubans have been made to feel like significant contributors to the destiny of their country. By assuming an active role, Cubans feel, as Kozol (1979) has said, "an exhilarating sense of participation in the shaping of the world in which they live, children who grow up, not as objects of historical change. . ."

Elementary Education in Cuba

Consider the image of elementary schools where both teachers and students understand the goals of education and are cognizant of the academic and behavioral expectations placed upon them. Consider a structured curriculum with a standard body of knowledge that everyone is required to learn. Imagine elementary schools where competency is a crucial aspect of a curriculum that considers the idea of social promotion alien to its goals. After this image is constructed, place these elementary schools in city neighborhoods and small, rural communities. Those who find this image appealing would no doubt feel somewhat comfortable in a Cuban elementary school.

Before the Revolution, these public elementary schools did not exist in each neighborhood, making schooling inaccessible to large segments of the society. In 1956, 50 percent of the total population had never been to school. Prior to the revolution elementary school children spent only two to four hours a day in school, and many teachers were not required to demonstrate knowledge of their subjects. But the revolution changed that reality, and elementary education in Cuba today is vastly different from the ineffective system of 20 years ago.

Early in the Revolution, Castro stated that "people who are uneducated are ungovernable." This premise has been translated into a national priority for universal education. Consequently, education is now compulsory through age 16, and shortly, a high school education will be mandatory. At this time, 98.3 percent of children ages six through twelve attend school.

The more specific goals of elementary education are to teach students the basics of reading, writing, and arithmetic. Additionally, students learn the tenets of the revolution and government through highly structured, politically oriented classroom material. This insures that students develop a common political and social spirit and goal. In glancing through an elementary reader, it is difficult to find many lessons that are not laced with accounts of revolutionary heroism, the positive effects of the revolution, or admonishments regarding everyone's responsibility to support the continuing cause of the revolution.

The government's goal of developing a well-rounded person pervades the elementary school curriculum with emphasis placed on academics, sports, work, and community involvement. Initially, the concept of combining work and study was not a part of the elementary school day; however, the young students voiced a desire to "be like the older kids." Consequently, elementary age children now spend part of each day maintaining small gardens.

The organization of each individual school is decided at the national level. Teaching procedures and approaches are highly structured and determined by a small group of educators in the government's Ministry of Education. Elementary schools in Cuba, in almost every respect, are "xerox-like" copies with the original emanating from a strong, central authority.

In each elementary school, a teacher will stay with the same class of children from the first through fourth grades. Commencing with the fifth and sixth grade levels, the curriculum becomes more diverse, and the concept of departmentalization is introduced. At the end of sixth grade, students must make a career choice by deciding which avenue of education they will pursue. This choice, which is

aided by extensive counseling, is dependent upon demonstrated ability, willingness to work hard, the students' interests, slots available, and the needs of the society as determined by the government.

Demonstrated ability and competence are key words in Cuban elementary education. Students are not allowed to progress to the next skill level until they have mastered the previous one.

Early identification and remediation of potential learning problems are a mandatory aspect of the curriculum. Students in first grade who are having difficulty learning are given extra help both during and after school; during the summer, the work is intensified. If these students are still behind grade level by the beginning of second grade, they remain in the classroom but receive assistance in a small group setting and continuing after-school help. If these students are still below grade level by the end of second grade, they are placed in a special class of three to four children for intensive remedial help. This year is a combination of second and third grades; upon completion, most students go on to the fourth grade. Those who still have not mastered third grade material must repeat this special class. If a student is not able to demonstrate competency after repeating the special class once, that student is usually placed in a school for special children.

Social promotion, or "dragging" as the Cubans call it, does not exist. Students who have difficulty in school but are still able to demonstrate sixth grade competency usually advance to "work shop" schools where they learn skills such as carpentry and plumbing. By seventh grade, those students who have demonstrated an ability to succeed in school are allowed to continue in truly academic areas. According to the Cuban government, 81.7 percent of the junior high and high school group participates in daytime, academic schooling. The remainder always has the option of attending night adult education courses. Although tutoring in specific areas is encouraged during upper levels of education, intensive remedial work is nonexistent beyond elementary school.

In the United States, the term "parent involvement" induces differing reactions ranging from the obvious hostility of some school administrators to benign participation by parents afraid to express disinterest. "Parent involvement" can mean anything from raising money for the purchase of curtains for the school library to advising a principal on curriculum development. In Cuba, "parent involvment" means one thing: parents are expected to become involved in and be accountable for their children's learning, especially during elementary school. If a child displays difficulty in learning, that child not only receives help at school, but the parents also are called in and instructed on how to help their child every night at home. Parents are expressly responsible for helping their children learn. If the parents need assistance in this endeavor, another person in the community is assigned to those particular parents and aids in the task. An often heard statement in Cuba is, "If one is not learning, one is teaching." The involvement of parents in the actual teaching process is considered an important, nonexpendable aspect of elementary education in Cuba.

In summary, the Cuban elementary school concept with its highly structured organization and standard textbooks, materials, teaching methods, and philosophy is duplicated in every city neighborhood and countryside farm town. The major goal of this universal, politically-oriented elementary education is to prepare Cubans

to become contributing, productive members of the society and to further the cause of the revolution. When assessing the appropriateness or desirability of this structured, uniform approach, the educational system must be placed in its proper context. In the past 20 years Cuba has been trying desperately to progress from the status of an underdeveloped, poor country with all its encompassing problems to a country that demonstrates revolutionary progress economically and in the general well-being of its populace. Education is seen as the major vehicle through which these goals can be accomplished; the sense of urgency in Cuba leaves little time to enjoy intellectual discussions on differing philosophies.

Vocational and Technical Education in Cuba

As an alternative to lower secondary education, vocational-technical educational opportunities are available to Cuban students after completion of the six-year elementary education program. Three-year technical schools offer a combination of general education and training in mechanical, technical, agricultural, and commercial areas.

For many students, the completion of the three-year program is an entry into the job market or on-the-job training programs similar to apprenticeship programs. As members of the adult work force, additional education becomes available in the adult education program through the high school level or at technological institutions on a part-time basis. Graduates of the technical schools who show ability and aptitude for additional formal training are allowed to continue their full-time education through the technological institutes, and a few will progress to university-level programs in engineering or other technologies.

For the AASCU delegation, the closest contact with technical education was a visit to the Instituto Superior Politecnico, the former School of Technology of the University of Havana. Separated from the University in 1976 by the Ministry of Superior Education, the engineering school is being built in the outskirts of Havana and is scheduled for completion in 1985. Planned for 20,000 students, there are now approximately 14,000 enrolled, including more than 2,000 boarding students. Many of the others are enrolled in six-year night programs and special projects. While other technological institutes exist throughout the country, several specialties are offered only at this institution.

Students are provided the opportunity to take courses leading to degrees and engineering certification in construction, hydraulics, agriculture, electronics, industrial, chemical, transportation, and architectural engineering. The typical program includes less than 10 percent non-engineering subjects. The culmination of the engineering program is the preparation of a "diploma work", or research report, usually done during the last semester. The report must be accepted by a faculty tribunal before the student is graduated.

The revolution placed extremely heavy demands on technical and professional groups, traditionally in short supply. These groups were seriously depleted by the mass emigration of many of the country's best trained personnel. Approximately one dozen engineering professors remained, faced with the dual task of meeting demands for primary services and serving as the core of professors charged with developing a new system of technical education. The leadership of technical education today comes from that small core of young professionals who chose to remain in Cuba twenty years ago, and their dedication to the country's developing technical education system is noteworthy and understandable.

At the time of the revolution about 300 students were enrolled in engineering studies at the University of Havana. The rapid expansion and significant accomplishments of technical education since 1960 were made possible by extensive use of the better senior students to teach lower level courses. No other means existed to meet the escalating needs for technically trained professionals, typical of most developing nations. The Cuban system appears to have met the basic needs of a rapidly expanding nation for minimal technical and professional services.

At present, Cuba is placing considerable emphasis on post-graduate education and research in the technical and professional areas, primarily through the universities of eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. Professionals from the socialist nations are working extensively in Cuban institutions, providing technical assistance as well as some graduate-level training. Although post-graduate education and research in Cuba is receiving strong support from the government, heavy teaching responsibilities continue to be the norm. Rectors and directors of the universities, technological institutes, and professional schools all describe with excitement their goals for faculty improvement through increasing post-graduate and research opportunities.

Adult Education in Cuba

As the leadership in Cuba likes to explain, over one million of the adults in pre-revolutionary Cuba, particularly those living in small isolated villages, could neither read nor write. Thus, the literacy program became a focal point for Castro's initiatives in education.

A massive program was developed, involving approximately 150,000 youngsters, young adults, and public school teachers who were spread out over the island to teach their elders. The program had two critical objectives: first, to teach the illiterate to read and write; and, second, to mobilize youth on behalf of the revolution. Both appear to be eminently successful.

The young people were sent to the villages to work with the adults and to tutor them in the evenings. Each teacher was counted as a member of the "Army of Young Teachers" and wore a uniform of sorts: olive pants, a gray shirt, and an olive green beret. At first, participation on the part of regular teachers was voluntary. Later it was made compulsory.

At the outset, the government strove for a teacher/student ratio of two-to-one. Eventually it had to settle for a ratio around four-to-one. Initial sessions began with the pupil completing a questionnaire, with the teacher's help, that summarized his or her work career and other pertinent details. A record was kept of each pupil's progress. Three standardized tests were administered; mastery of the last marked completion of the program. Primers were developed by the government for teachers to use, and all teachers and pupils used the same primer. The primers moved from single words to basic phrases and from there to sentences and simple paragraphs; thereby building vocabulary and concepts. As final evidence of success, each person would send a letter to Castro, telling him of the results of his or her hard labor.

This literacy campaign largely fulfilled its objectives. By the start of 1961, the educational ministry was able to announce that 707,000 of the adults tutored were literate. Further, with an adult population of approximately 5.5 million, this meant that less than five percent of Cuba's population remained illiterate—a remarkable achievement for any country. Contrast this with many other underdeveloped countries in Latin America and in other parts of the world, where 70-80 percent of the adults are often found to be illiterate. Through standardization and ideologically-directed content, the revolution also was placed on a firmer foundation in the minds of the people who achieved literacy.

With the completion of the literacy project, a follow-up effort encouraged the successful 707,000 members to "fight the battle for sixth grade." The goal was to involve at least 500,000 people who had passed the literacy exam. There is presently no firm data indicating how many have achieved the sixth grade level to date, but it would be fair to estimate that over half of the original 707,000 have moved to that point or beyond. The government is now seeking to move those achieving sixth grade mastery to the ninth grade. The ultimate hope is to get them through twelve years of study. This is occurring at the same time that universal education is provided for young people.

As the battle for basic adult literacy moves towards victory, emphasis is shifting to a variety of other ways that adults can continue to better themselves. With the cooperation of the Federation of Women and a number of other governmental and

quasi-governmental agencies, education services are provided to adults regardless of occupation and location. At present there are approximately 500,000 adults in these education programs. This number represents a 200,000 decrease from the 1976 figure. Cuban officials state that the drop occurred mainly because the big push to get most adults to the sixth grade created an abnormal increase, which receded after that level was reached. It is believed that many older adults no longer could see major personal advantages in continuing their studies beyond sixth grade. Thus, 500,000 adults engaged in education each year is seen as a realistic future projection.

Apparently, adults are found at all levels of education—from those still working for their sixth grade diploma to those studying for junior high, high school, and university mastery. To quote one Cuban official: "We have two levels of education networks—that for 'student workers' and that for 'worker students'."

"Worker students" are given substantial opportunities to advance themselves educationally. At the elementary level, adults attend school four nights a week in two-hour sessions. Many are housewives. According to the *Family Code*, which is the official publication of the Ministry of Justice, it is mandatory that housewives who wish to continue their education receive babysitting and other support from their husbands. The Federation of Women, which did a great deal to further the literacy campaign, estimates that more than 125,000 housewives have mastered the sixth grade level.

Most communities have an adult education center for those undertaking junior high and high school work. Here students will attend classes for two to three hours a night, four nights a week, basically following the same curriculum as the younger students. Once an adult student has completed high school study, which takes approximately one year longer than a regular student, he or she is eligible for a number of higher education experiences. Officials indicated that some of the students studying at the high school level were part of the original literacy campaign, but they were unable to provide statistical documentation. There is no reason, however, to doubt this claim.

In higher education, 48 percent of the course work is directed to entitled "workers" courses and are offered for adults who have full-time jobs. Part-time study for adults is analogous to the growing trend in the United States, where increasingly large numbers of mature adults attempt to advance themselves both personally and professionally through higher education. Generally, the government estimates that it takes a part-time student approximately a year longer to complete his or her degree work in whatever curriculum is chosen.

In short, the revolution in Cuba has brought about a revolution in education—particularly for adults. Most of those who were unable to read and write have learned. Those who could expand beyond this point have had a number of opportunities, limited only by their motivation, intelligence, and fatigue level. The latter should not be underestimated, as the average Cuban work week is 44 hours and many volunteer in "worker brigades" for weekend work to further the "cause of the revolution."

Because the literacy program was so successful, it should be considered as a model not only for underdeveloped nations, but also for the more developed ones, such as the United States—which is now dealing with its own version of the literacy problem. There are five basic components of the literacy program generally applicable to other situations:

- The Cuban government and people had a cause. Their goal was to eliminate adult illiteracy in one year. While there may have been higher and somewhat loftier goals, this was a specific cause identified and appreciated by all people. This shared cause was essential to achieve what ordinarily would have been considered the impossible.

- There was a commitment of resources. Once the goal was set, vast numbers of young people and teachers were committed to its purpose. Presently, ten percent of the gross national product in Cuba goes to education. While we were unable to determine what portion of the GNP went to this and other educational projects in the early 60's, one could assume that it was even more.

- There was direct and significant involvement of the people. Over 100,000 young persons served as teachers. In effect, once the priority was set, the whole country took the cue. Right now, much of the middle level leadership in Cuba has come from those who participated as leaders in the literacy program. The involvement of so many people achieved not only the goal of educating adults, but also the larger objective of getting the populace to back the revolution. A permanently committed cadre of skilled and loyal workers was created.

- The program developed and used common materials. There were three tests founded on basically the same kind of instruction. There was little confusion or quibbling over method, materials, or what constituted a finished product. Of course, this sacrificed considerable freedom; but it produced results.

- There were incentives for those who participated. Both teachers and students were seen as heroes and received appropriate recognition when individuals, families, and villages were able to master the first levels of reading and writing. A special uniform for teachers was also a way of highlighting the importance of the project.

Relationship Between Postsecondary Education and the Cultural Arts

Armando Hart, head of the Cuban Ministry of Culture created in 1976, pointed out to the delegation that Cuban culture has evolved after four centuries of merging Spanish and African roots. Nineteenth century cultural development in Cuba, he said, was colored by three idealistic movements: an aspiration for independence, a struggle against slavery, and a struggle against colonialism. From 1930 to the revolution, according to the Minister, neo-colonialism did not foster this development, but in 1959, enlightened revolution leaders showed an understanding of society's need for it.

Since the virtual elimination of illiteracy and certain other societal ills, the emphasis on culture has been more pronounced. The establishment of grass-roots organizations, such as Cultural Councils that seat representatives from many groups, and Cultural Houses serving as clearing centers for all local events, reflects certain basic principles of the revolution. These are: new elements in the arts should come from the people and be debated by the central government; cultural expressions of great beauty and strength in past periods should not be destroyed simply because a new social ideology exists; forms of artistic expression should be free as long as the content is not contrary to principles of the revolution; a favorable environment for the artist's work should be created; and artists and writers should have the right to participate in the formulation and adoption of policies regarding culture.

It was said that the revolution view of culture is that individual talents should be enhanced, not for personal glorification but for the benefit of the masses; and that all arts—music, painting, sculpture, drama, literature, dance, handicrafts—should be brought to all people. Actually, great strides have been made toward meeting goals such as libraries and vocational schools in every province; museums all over the country; films in even the most remote areas (a movie industry was established in the 1960's); and regional theater groups and puppet theaters.

Prior to 1959 Cuba had two symphony orchestras; now there are six. Twelve professional choirs have been established in accordance with a projected goal of one in each province. The National Dance Ensemble, National Theater Ensemble, and National Folklore Ensemble travel throughout the country with their productions. The National Ballet of Cuba, led by prima ballerina Alicia Alonso, has achieved international prestige. Although ballet is not a national tradition, this classical dance form has become amazingly popular in Cuba.

Prior to the revolution, the Academy of Plastic Arts (dating from 1918) in Havana offered courses available only to those able to afford them. Today all education is free. In 1959, art education was integrated into the school curriculum, and in 1961, the National School of Arts (secondary-level) was established with branches in every province to accommodate peasants, workers, and farmers.

Three members of the AASCU delegation visited the Superior Institute of Arts in Havana, presently the only such postsecondary school in the country. Barely two years old, it consists of a complex of attractive buildings devoted to plastic arts and a main building which houses administrative offices, performance areas, an auditorium, classrooms and practice rooms. Most of its 500 students are graduates of the National School of Arts, but all have been admitted on a selective basis after passing a technical examination and surviving the Institute's screening process.

Primary school children who show promise in the performing arts are identified and encouraged at an early age. Selected annually through Interest Circles they have joined, budding artists are given lessons and supplied with instruments. Later, the Pioneer organization provides opportunities for more direct involvement in all facets of the arts. Consequently, students arrive at the Superior Institute with specialized backgrounds as well as the standard secondary school academic credits. Delegation visitors were impressed with the high calibre of two impromptu student performances by a violinist and a guitarist.

The Institute, according to Vice Rector Sonia Almazon, prepared its students for careers in three broad areas through a five-year program. Scenery arts includes drama and theater, performance critique, and related skills. Music comprises such fields as composition, choral directing, and solo performance. Plastic arts embraces painting, sculpture, and engraving.

Graduates become either teachers at the primary, secondary or university level, depending on grades earned and degree of proficiency; "researchers" (i.e. designers, supervisors, critics, directors, painters, sculptors, engravers, composers, etc.); or performers. Every graduate is expected to work in his or her field as a social service. A national center receives (from the Institute) recommendations for level of placement of each student, and then matches available job opportunities to students' prioritized choices. In some instances, artists may elect to teach on their own and sell their own works. A performing musician may purchase a personal instrument after graduation but is not required to do so. Up to the present it has been possible to guarantee each graduate a job in his/her field. Renumeration is always strictly in accordance with government set standards; no artist, even one in great demand, commands an extravagant fee.

The Superior Institute of Arts, like other higher institutions in Cuba requires its first and second year students to perform career-related work as a social service. This one-month period is viewed as a useful means of familiarizing students with field work and of linking them with the cultural realities of the country. It is apparent that the government considers work in cultural areas one of the "fronts" of the revolution—on a par with advancements in public health, science, agronomy, or education, for instance.

One pilot work project, carried out last summer with considerable success in a countryside primary school, involved 22 Institute students working with nursery and primary school children as well as community adults. At the end of four weeks, two choruses had been formed, two theatrical-musical productions had been presented, and an exhibit of arts and handicrafts had been held. Under the guidance of the students, participants designed scenery, created puppets, played instructional games, and learned techniques for using paper mache, paint, and clay. The Institute students also presented recitals, talked about their instruments, and taught listeners how to "hear" music.

One of these students shared with delegation visitors his delight at the response of unsophisticated rural people to these heretofore unknown cultural experiences. Their enthusiasm will warrant expansion of the project into additional communities next summer.

Physical Sciences at the Centro Nacional de Investigaciones Cientificas

The Cuban Center for Science carries out scientific investigation of a complexity and magnitude similar to research projects in the United States, but the center does not have the sophisticated facilities and equipment found at U.S. government sponsored research institutions. (Only with the latest equipment can Cuban scientists compete with research being conducted by top scientific institutions in the U.S.)

Two major obstacles face Cuban scientists in their quest to acquire modern equipment. First, the U.S. trade embargo makes it virtually impossible for Cuban scientists to purchase needed up-to-date equipment from the U.S. Second, there are not enough funds to purchase the limited amount of up-to-date equipment available from Communist countries.

The embargo, coupled with insufficient funds for libraries, also has denied Cuba necessary up-to-date scientific journals and books.

In comparison to science libraries at U.S. institutions, the Cuban Science Center library appears to be small and inadequate. Furthermore, Cuban scientists indicate that when the embargo is lifted, the millions of dollars needed in this area may not be available to them.

The scientific research conducted in Cuba compares to what is called non-profit research of the non-degree granting type done at U.S. governmental institutions such as the Northern Regional Research Laboratory in Peoria, Illinois. However, there is essentially only one federally-sponsored, non-profit research center in Cuba, while in the U.S. the number of such institutions nearly tripled, between 1951 and 1967, growing from 23 to 67.

In 1968, the annual expenditure of all non-profit institutes in the U.S. was approximately $1.6 billion, whereas in Cuba, the center's 1978 budget was approximately $7 million.

The Centro Nacional de Investigaciones Cientificas, like many U.S. institutions, is located near a university campus and staffed by full-time non-teaching personnel who are not subject to university review. U.S. institutions of this type include the Rand Corporation, the Lawrence Radiation Laboratory at Berkeley, and the Brookhaven National Laboratory in Long Island, New York.

In the U.S., institutions conduct theoretical and basic research or applied research, although there is some overlap. In Cuba, the Centro Nacional de Investigaciones Cientificas does equal amounts of theoretical and applied research. The Center works on problems whose solutions will be beneficial to the Cuban government.

Ways to dispose of excess agricultural products and use waste products to obtain needed chemicals and medicines are two examples of Cuban research. In the U.S., the Western Regional Research Laboratory in California and the Southern Regional Research Laboratory in Louisiana conduct similar research on agricultural waste products. With the lifting of the embargo, these U.S. research institutes and the Cuban Center are expected to engage in cooperative work. It appears that Americans are far ahead of Cubans in this type of research.

Discussion with key Cuban Centro Nacional de Investigaciones Cientificas personnel about possible post-embargo scientific cooperation showed their willing-

ness to participate in such a venture. The Center director already is working out agreements with a few U.S. centers and universities—even though the embargo is still on.

At the Cuban institute, scientists do not worry about failure; they have true freedom to work as they choose. Moreover, they do not feel the pressure to meet deadlines. As research at the Cuban Center grows, there is a move towards more independence from the University of Havana, even though the two institutions have been closely linked.

There is much publicity about atomic energy, military, nuclear, and space research in the U.S., but little was said about research in these fields in Cuba. However, since research work in these areas would be considered classified, it is not likely to have been publicized.

In conclusion, it is clear that much will be gained when good working relationships are able to develop between the Cuban Center and American institutions. For example, cooperation may occur in conducting research on Cuban and U.S. agricultural waste and citrus products as well as in other areas of theoretical and basic research.

Agriculture and Rural Development

The revolution affected agriculture probably to the same degree that it influenced the rest of the country and its industries. Cuba is heavily dependent upon agriculture and agricultural industries for its food products and major export trade. Agriculture is not an industry that is easily nationalized for a number of reasons. Primarily, people living on farms are accustomed to private ownership and do not readily adjust to the type of conditions that are created with governmental ownership, such as living in small units of large apartment complexes.

Both written and oral reports indicated that most of the land and the agricultural enterprises were nationalized following the revolution. All components of the agriculture industry were reorganized according to a plan by the central government with the exception of the tobacco industry. There were two major decrees by the government that removed land from private ownership. The First Agrarian Reform law was passed in May 1959, soon after success was declared in the Castro revolution. At that time, private ownership was limited to 1,000 acres. In October 1963, a Second Agrarian Reform law limited the amount of land that could be held in private ownership to approximately 166 acres. This restriction did not greatly affect the tobacco industry because most of the land involved in tobacco production is in relatively small holdings. It is understood that the government did not wish to centralize that industry, feeling that private ownership might be more effective in the production of this crop as tobacco production is largely a family enterprise and cannot be produced effectively on large holdings. Thus, nationalization involves about 70 percent of the agrarian population of Cuba, and it is evident that major difficulties have been experienced in trying to maintain agricultural productivity and to increase essential cash export crops, such as sugar.

The agriculture of the country is complex and far more time than was available would be necessary to fully understand this segment of the economy of Cuba. The AASCU delegation had the opportunity to make only two important visits in the agricultural area. The first visit was to the Picadura Valley dairy project about 30-40 miles from Havana; the second, a special visit arranged for H. F. Robinson and John Duff to the National Center for Agriculture Research.

Valley of Picadura Dairy Project

The Valley of Picadura dairy project is widely promoted by government officials as a most successful government agricultural operation. This project consists of 35,000 hectares of land (approximately 86,500 acres) assembled from many farmers who were very poor prior to the revolution and lived in the area in thatched huts on small holdings of very rocky and unproductive soil. The project is now a productive grazing area supporting some 30,000 head of cattle, and the cattle are continuously improved through a complex breeding program. Ramon Castro, Fidel Castro's brother, is in charge of this project, and met with the group to explain the dairy operation and breeding program.

The basic breeding material is the Friesian-Holstein cattle brought from Canada and crossed with the Zebu breed. The major objective of the breeding program is to improve milk production and resistance to the tropical heat while maintaining

as high a level of meat production as possible. The AASCU delegation was told that milk production has increased from 5 liters per cow per day at the beginning of the program to an average of approximately 15.5 liters per day per cow at present.

Conditions created for the farmer are probably typical of other nationalized regions of the country. The delegation visited large living complexes where the farm families are brought together in an apartment-type structure. The apartments consisted of two small bedrooms, a living room, and kitchen. Each family was given a television set and a refrigerator upon moving into the complex. The basic living requirements appeared to be available in these apartments and a very low rent is charged to each occupant. While visiting one of the apartments, the delegation met a couple who were about 70 years of age. The farmer's wife told us she had been a school teacher for about 50 years. The farmer was very glad to tell us how much better his living conditions were under the present arrangement provided by the government of the revolution. Land is not individually owned. Each farmer is paid a salary for farmwork.

The tractors and other equipment used in the farming enterprises in the Valley of Picadura were from the Soviet Union and other European communist countries. The delegation was told that some equipment being used in agriculture is received from Japan and Canada.

An elementary school is located near the apartment complex for the farmers' children. The work-study program implemented by the school utilizes the agricultural enterprises in which the parents are involved.

The National Institute of Agricultural Research

Special arrangements were made for a visit to the National Institute of Agricultural Research under development approximately 30-40 miles from Havana. The center for agricultural teaching and research is one of three such developing facilities in Cuba. The research is devoted primarily to animal studies with special emphasis on diagnosis and control of animal diseases, including research and teaching on the improvement of animal health.

The Higher Institute of Agriculture, as the National Institute is called, is administered by the Ministry of Higher Education and headed by Dr. Efrain Abreu Heredia. The host for the visit to the center was Professor Roberto Iglesias Alberni, vice director of the Center.

The teaching facility will accommodate between 4,700 and 4,800 students upon completion in 1980. About 3,000 students will be distributed evenly between agronomy and veterinary medicine with the remaining students enrolled in other agricultural specialities. The program of study in the teaching center is intended for the bachelor of science degree; graduate study is carried out largely in the research facilities now under construction.

The two research and graduate complexes are the Animal Health and Disease Center, and the Center for Agronomic and Other Horticultural Crops Research. We visited only the animal center as the crops facility is only partially constructed and will be occupied considerably later than the animal research facility. The animal health center is expected to be occupied in the next few months, but it looked as if it would not be complete for another one or two years. Upon completion, this

center will consist of six buildings costing 12 million pesos, with the Canadian government providing equipment for the facility and the Soviet Union providing scientific planning expertise and preparation for staffing. The entire facility is about 160,000 square feet and would cost approximately $60-75 million if built in this country.

Principal areas of research will include animal pathology, hygiene, micro-biology, physiology, and genetics. The main problems to be studied in the early stages of research are animal health in relation to dairy and beef cattle production, selection for improved growth rate of animals in tropical environments, and improvement of reproduction rates in various breeds. The facility will house 170 research workers, a number of whom are completing their Ph.D. degrees at various institutions, including this center. There are 40 candidates working toward the Ph.D. degree at the center, and it was emphasized that the center will become a major graduate center in the agricultural sciences when completed.

A very important part of this program is the veterinary clinic which is most elaborate and extremely well planned. The equipment is the latest available, and the personnel operating the facility appeared well trained in the latest techniques and qualifed for the program about to be launched. It is evident that a major part of this facility will be devoted to the diagnosis and treatment of animal diseases with major emphasis on large animals, particularly cattle.

The annual budget of the National Agricultural Research Center was stated to be 18 million pesos per year which would be about three times the quoted operating budget of the Cuban National Center for Research. When this agricultural facility is completed and totally funded, there will be 600 research workers involved in various research, teaching, and other staff functions with a budget equal to approximately 30-40 million pesos per year.

General Impressions About Agriculture

The AASCU delegation had only limited opportunities to visit the agricultural industry and the new research and teaching facilities being constructed by the Cuban government. Nevertheless, it was evident that Castro is committed to building a strong, broad based agricultural program, and undoubtedly he is achieving some success. Great emphasis is given to diversifying the agricultural production program in order to have the country less dependent on the export of sugar. Presently sugar is the major export product, amounting to about $385 million per year. Even with the definite commitment on the part of the government to try and decrease Cuba's dependence upon sugar, the success of the program it is not yet clear.

It is obvious that Cuba needs outside technical assistance to develop the research which is so vitally important to the growth of agricultural industries. The AASCU delegation was told that a mission from Cuba recently returned from the United States and visited a number of institutions. Cuba is in the process of developing cooperative arrangements with the University of Minnesota for providing agricultural expertise. The various officials in the area of agriculture appeared very interested in working toward cooperative arrangements between AASCU institutions too.

When the political situation allows, it seems that a wide range of agricultural fields may be appropriate for cooperative agreements with AASCU institutions.

Furthermore, agricultural programs of AASCU institutions could assist Cuba in the development of its agricultural industry. The diversified agriculture sought by that country, the limited resources available for research and teaching, and the scale on which the enterprises are likely to be developed, suggest that highly effective and productive cooperative arrangements between various agencies concerned with agriculture in Cuba and AASCU institutions would be mutually beneficial.

Race Relations

The majority of Cubans are descendants of a population estimated to be 60 percent Spanish and 40 percent Black African in the mid-1800's. Today, after less than 20 years of rule by Fidel Castro, Cuba seems proud to proclaim that it has solved "the racial problem."

Upon acquiring power, Castro began to advocate the idea of Cubans being a distinct people—a blend of persons from the two prominent races. He discouraged the idea of being either Spanish or African, and promoted mingling of the colors.

The government encouraged interracial marriages, thereby establishing a helpful climate for persons of different color who wished to marry. A program of deliberate reconditioning of family and community attitudes was instigated. Newlyweds were aided in their efforts to gain family and community acceptance of their marriage. However, older Cubans strongly rejected the idea of interracial marriages. In an effort to escape the new social decree, many Cubans of lighter hue left Cuba and took up residence in the United States.

Striving to build a favorable climate for its program of "combining colors" the Cuban government distributed information and educational materials about countries where this social practice has been an apparent success.

Hawaii was pointed out as a place where beautiful people have evolved from the blending of colors. Hawaiians are said to be a blend of Melanesian black, Oriental yellow, Polynesian brown, and Anglo-Saxon white. The present day beautifully complected Hawaiian is a result of only a few generations of cross color marriages.

Also, Cubans are told to look at Puerto Rico as another place where blending has occurred. African slaves accounted for nearly half of the Puerto Rican population in 1860, but today, Africans have been completely absorbed into the Puerto Rican population.

In New Zealand a great boom in marriages between persons of English background and the natives of Polynesian origin has been going on for the past 25 years. During the previous century, whites for the most part maintained their separate communities. Today it is estimated that 40 percent of the natives and the whites have intermarried. Projections are, that within the next few years, one out of every three New Zealanders will have a heritage consisting of a blend of the two races.

It is now said that Cuban interracial marriages have occurred to such an extent that by the year 2,000, it will be difficult to tell whether a Cuban is of Spanish or African origin.

Prior to the 1959 revolution, the racial problem in Cuba was equated with that of the southern United States. Cuban citizens have indicated that the revolutionary government felt that an increased rate of African and Spanish intermarriage would decrease racial tensions and make the revolution more successful.

The recent rise of Africa as an important continent has probably had much to do with solving the racial problem in Cuba. Cuba's involvement in Angola and elsewhere in Africa makes a solution of the racial problem in Cuba a must, because many Cubans are being killed in Africa and alot of Cuban money is being expended there. In order to justify these sacrifices and expenditures to his people, Castro has been able to state that Cubans are fighting for their homeland. Moreover, now that Cubans are in Africa, it would be difficult for them to remain there if racial discrimination was apparent in Cuba.

Cubans openly state that they have all come to realize that apartness and division solves no color problems; it just creates them. The Cubans are pleased that they have gone from extreme separateness to extreme togetherness.

Potential Programs for United States–Cuban Educational Collaboration

It was clear from the climate and the tenor of the discussions that both Cuban officials and the AASCU representatives were contemplating eventual cooperation on an individual scholarly level as well as through collaborative patterns of linkages, either departmental or institutional. The Cubans indicated that their top priorities were in agronomy, agriculture-related biology, engineering, computer technology, educational technology and methodology, and natural sciences in general.

Collaborative agreements already exist between Cuba and some of the socialist countries, such as Czechoslovakia, Rumania, Hungary, Bulgaria, Mongolia, North Vietnam and North Korea, but the fairly dominant presence of Soviet collaborators was evident. It was also obvious that many Cuban scholars had to labor hard studying the Russian language in order to use the Russian research material made available to them. In contrast, most of these Cuban scholars already knew English. Reasonably rapid accessibility to U.S. scholarly periodicals and research should represent a substantial step forward in U.S.–Cuban educational cooperation. It is unfortunate that U.S. educational research material is not now readily available to Cuba.

Both Cuba and the U.S. seem willing in principle to promote the exchange of scholars in a number of fields. While U.S. regulations currently prohibit the use of government funds in relation to Cuba as part of the embargo, it is anticipated that in due course and with the lifting of the embargo these exchanges would be facilitated. Even at present limited exchanges are possible, but they are complicated by certain legal restrictions and the lack of direct flights, except occasional expensive charter flights, from Miami to Havana.

The AASCU delegates and their Cuban colleagues reviewed quite candidly the possible pattern of educational collaboration and agreed that there was great potential in exploring, at some future date, joint seminars, short- and long-term exchanges of professors and students, and exchange of information and materials. While the political entanglements of Cuba in parts of Africa and Asia are currently exacerbating U.S. foreign policy towards Cuba, it has been and continues to be AASCU policy to attempt to insulate the long-term conduct of educational and cultural relations from the daily fluctuations of foreign policy. AASCU is therefore confident that in due course American and Cuban higher education will develop a normalcy of exchange of ideas and scholars which is the trademark of good universities everywhere.

It is natural that Cuba would be particularly development-oriented in its educational effort. There are many obvious areas in which AASCU can be of natural assistance while benefiting from a variety of international, intercultural relationships with Cuba. The delegation to Cuba has been successful in establishing that the climate and mutual needs for cooperation exist. AASCU looks forward to gradual implementation programs in the months ahead.